Philadelphia. Citizens.

MEMORIAL

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,

IN FAVOR OF

CONSOLIDATING THE CITY AND DISTRICTS OF PHILADELPHIA.

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MEMORIAL.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania:

The undersigned an Executive Committee appointed by a general meeting of citizens of the city and county of Philadelphia, in the year 1849, and continued by a like meeting in 1850, for the purpose of maturing a bill for the union of the said city and county into one municipal body, to be called the City of Philadelphia, have the pleasure of reporting a measure which has received their deliberate consideration and the unanimous approval of the Committee.

Uninfluenced by either personal or political bias, and prompted by a sense of the public welfare only, this Committee, composed of men of all parties, earnestly commend this measure to the favorable action of the Legislature. In doing so, they beg leave to refer to a valuable report made by a Senator from the County at your last Session, in favor of a union of the city and districts, and aiming at nothing else than a presentation in a concise form of some of the evidences of public opinion, we beg leave to state:

That the disastrous and destructive mobs of 1844, developed the necessity of a more united and efficient Police than then existed in the city and districts of Philadelphia, and in November of that year a Town Meeting of citizens favorable to consolidating the city and districts into a single city was held, at which meeting resolutions in favor of the measure were passed. A committee being appointed to draft a bill, discharged their duty; submitted the bill prepared by them to a subsequent Town Meeting, where it was adopted and ordered to be presented to the Legislature.

This bill was presented in due form by one of the members from the County at the opening of the Legislative Session of 1845, with numerous memorials asking for its passage, but owing to an opposition started in the Councils of the City, arising from the impression that the debts of the several districts could not be consolidated, nor the trusts held by them administered by the new city, without doing some injustice,—the consolidation bill was allowed to slumber on the files of the Legislature, and in lieu thereof the Act entitled "An act for the better regulation of Police in the city of Philadelphia and adjacent districts," was passed. Vide page 380, &c. of the Pamphlet Laws of that Session.

This Act, as will be seen by its provisions, requires that a body of Policemen shall be organized by the authorities of the several districts, and kept in readiness to be used when required by the Sheriff of the County in the suppression of riots. This force was organized in due time and kept up, but it was not necessary to call

it into service until the summer of 1849, and on this first occasion for its service, it was found so unsuited and inadequate to the purpose of its creation, that on the second occasion for its use during the riot at Sixth and Mary streets, on the night of the 9th of October, 1849, the Sheriff did not call it out but resorted at once to the military force.

These circumstances caused the question of consolidation to be agitated anew. The Grand Inquest of the city and county of Philadelphia, for the September Term, 1849, in their presentment held the following language:

"The consolidation of the city and the incorporated districts in the county, into one municipal corporation, under one efficient head, would be, we believe the most effectual remedy; it would give to the city an united strength within itself, an uniform code of laws, without various territorial lines of divisions; both laws and boundaries are so numerous and conflicting at present as to be almost unknown, from the frequency of change, even by the oldest citizens. A well organized fire department, efficient and under control; an uniform rate of water rents and gas at lower prices, and a reduction of taxes of at least twenty per cent., a Police department and system combining a firm and energetic execution of the laws, and that would reflect credit upon our city, and not as at the present time, when the thief or burglar is permitted to be at large after robbing in some instances our citizens of their all, and Police officers corresponding with thieves and sharing with them, through a system of collusion, the fruits of their crimes, as recently disclosed in the robbery of the President of the Chester County Bank.

The election of councils by wards would be a check on unwise and wasteful legislation, the minority, the great balance wheel in all public bodies, would be represented, it would hold to strict accountability the majority, and prevent waste and extravagance insidiously creeping in from too long a possession of power by one body. To bring about these judicious reforms, the Grand Inquest inquiring for the county recommended to the citizens to hold meetings to devise means for the holding of a Convention to discuss the subject and bring about the union of the whole into one city.

We now turn from the contemplation of this mortifying picture as above exhibited, and appeal with pleasure to the intelligence of the citizens of the city and the incorporated districts of the county, to have all included in one municipal district, governed by one head and one power. This would bring about matters to raise a citizen's pride. Philadelphia would be found, we believe, upon just comparison, to stand high and fair above our ambitious and boasting neighbors. We should soon see a change in the increased vigorous execution of the laws, a cheap government, and officers fearless in the discharge of their duties; this once accomplished, would make it a most desirable residence as the loveliest city in the Union."

The Criminal Courts of the City and County of Philadelphia, are held six times a year, and at every term held since the one above referred to, with one exception, the Grand Inquest have in their presentment recommended consolidation as the most effectual remedy against the many evils which came under their notice.

These presentments have generally been in response to the charge of the Court at the opening of the term. At the June term, 1850, the charge of the presiding Judge contained the following language:

"I have for the last seven years, attentively observed the increase of crime. On the trial of numerous cases I have minutely endeavored to examine into the causes and inducements leading to their perpetration, and have deeply reflected upon what plan could be adopted by legal means to stay the progress of tumult and disorder among us.

In a densely populated place like the city and incrporated districts of the county, it is impossible to govern a mass of human beings thus congregated together, in different conditions, pursuing different occupations, and some comiug from almost all parts of the civilized globe, educated differently, each with their own views of independence, without *one well regulated municipal government.* There must be a police arrangement and an effective police to check and quell disorder. Unfortunately for this community, we have neither a well regulated municipal government or effective police force.

There are seven distinct muncipal governments in the city and incorporated districts, each created by separate and different statutes; each having their own peculiar views, laws rules and regulations, for the preservation of the peace within their own artificial boundaries. The lines which separate these respective municipalities are all imaginary and artificial; for we well know that hundreds of streets are constantly connecting the one with the other. It would seem that the mere geographical line of our condition was sufficient to convince any one that these communities thus separately organized, yet so closely connected, could not longer be well governed.

It is mainly for the want of *one general* well regulated municipal government, exercising a power which should always be delegated by the State, to each local organized body, that crime is not prevented or suppressed.

The city of Philadelphia and the incorporated districts of the county, as to their municipal government, are very much in the condition of the colonies after the close of the revolutionary war, and the acknowledgment of their independence by the mother country. Each colony or State had a government of its own, and was regulated by its own laws, when the States were separated in many instances only by artificial boundaries.

The want of a centralizing power and rational force was felt by all, and its necessity advocated by every wise statesman and patriot. This necessity produced the Constitution of the United States, and the union of the general government, which has been found to be safe and effective. It is clothed with sufficient power to quell every insurrection or rebellion among ourselves, as well as to defend us from encroachments from abroad.

Muncipal regulations, based upon similar principles, are as much wanted to govern the city and iucorporated districts, if it is ever expected that we shall have an effective police force to suppress crime, and keep the lawless and abandoned from destroying the quiet, inoffensive and well disposed citizen.

To attempt to give the reasons why the present system of muncipal

governments are not effective would occupy more of your attention than would be proper on this occasion. Many are obvious to the mind of every sensible man, and it ought to be sufficient to state that they have been tried for a long time and found defective; every year crime and outrage is increasing among us.

Nor, in my opinion, does this state of things arise because the people are worse in this than in other large places, or because there is not as much moral influence and teachings used here as in any other city; but it is because there is no efficient suppressing or restrainiug power over criminals. Each evil disposed person is permitted to do almost as he pleases, and there is no force to restrain or arrest the offender and bring him to an account.

Those who have police authority delegated to them to arrest offenders, generally feel independent of the power which has clothed them with authority, and will exert themselves to suppress crime, or arrest offenders, as their *feelings or interests* seem to dictate.

In more than one half of the numerous trials for riots which have been before me in the last seven years, I have observed that the energetic action of a very few discreet police officers might have prevented any disturbance."

Shortly after the presentment of the Grand Inquest above referred to, the following call for a Town meeting was issued.

TOWN MEETING.

A Union of the City and Incorporated Districts of the County, in one Municipal Corporation, and the Election of the Councils by Wards.

The Ciiizens of the City and adjoining Districts, friendly to the same, are requested to meet in General Town Meeting, on Friday evening, Nov. 16 1849, at seven o'clock, at the County Court House, Sixih and Chestnut streets, to devise means for the Union of the whole into one City. To bring about so desirable an object, it is hoped that every citizen, having at heart the success and prosperity of our community—the preservation of life, and the protection of property, will attend.

John Swift,	Jno. Leadbeater,	Eli K. Price,
Josiah Randall,	Geo. C. Naphes,	John Naglee,
Clement C. Biddle,	John G. Brenner,	Andrew Miiler,
A. M. Prevost,	Wm. G. Cochran,	Wm. H. Smith
William Rawle,	Jno. H. Dohnert,	Wllliam White,
Garrick Mallery,	C. L. Ingram,	Jacob Esher,
John Cadwalader,	Henry M. Watts.	James Magee,
Wm. S. Charnley,	William Elder,	Jno. H. Campbell,
G. G. Westcott,	Henry D. Gilpin,	Geo. W. Farr,
David Paul Brown,	A. Boyd Hamilton,	E. S. Jones
Benjamin Mifflin,	Henry S. Patterson,	T. M. Pettit,
Francis Wharton,	Henry Horn,	J. B. Sutherland,
Samuel H. Perkins,	Geo. H. Earle,	Samuel Barton,
Jacob Carrigan, Jr.	James Laws,	Daniel Smith, Sr.,
Jno. M. Kenedy,	Chapmau Biddle,	Wm. McGlensey,
James Durnell,	Henry A. Beck,	W. C. Parker,
Jacob Freas,	William West,	B. H. Brewster,
Edwin R. Cope,	L. Johnson,	Peter Ambruster,
John W. Kester,	Mahlon Gillingham,	Wm. R. Dickerson,
David Boyd,	Thomas Finley,	Jno. M. Coleman,
Geo. W. Tryon,	Geo. W. Biddle,	Peter Fritz,
Jno. M. Ogden,	Jacob Snider, Jr,	James Harper,
P. P. Morris,	Theodore Cuyler,	E. P. Middleton,
M. Myers,	B. Arthur Mitchell,	Thomas Sparks,
Thomas McGrath,	St. George T. Campbell,	Geo. K. Childs,
Thomas Bradford,	Wm. L. Hirst,	Harry Connelly,
E. Stoever,	Benjamin Stiles,	Passmore Williamson.

This meeting was very numerously attended, and the following are its proceedings:

TOWN MEETING.

A large and enthusiastic meeting of citizens, without distinction of party, was held last evening, in the County Court House, to adopt measures to obtain the passage of a law by the Legislature, uniting the present City and Districts into one City. The Court House was filled at an early hour, and the proceedings throughout were characterized with prudence and good sense.

Henry M. Watts, Esq., called the meeting to order, and nominated the Hon. John Swift as President.

Vice-Presidents.—Col. Clement C. Biddle, Henry M. Watts, Eli K. Price, Henry Horn, Henry D. Gilpin, Col. Andrew M. Prevost, Garrick Mallery, Daniel Deal, John Cadwallader, Job R. Tyson, Frederick Stoever, James A. Campbell, John G. Ringland, Samuel McMenamy, Andrew Miller, Peter Williamson, Henry L. Benner, Chas. Hortz, Dr. I. N. Marsellis, John M. Kennedy, George W. Tryon, John M. Coleman, John Nagle, Wm. S. Charnley, Lawrence Shuster, John M. Ogden, Jno. H. Dohnert, Henry Crilly, Hugh Clark, Patrick McBride, George W. Burr, John W. Kester, Oliver Evans, Patrick Sharp, Edward Gratz, Anthony Felton.

Secretaries.—Theodore Cuyler, Passmore Williamson, William McGlensey, Edwin R. Cope.

On taking the chair, Col. Swift stated the objects of the meeting in a neat and appropriate address.

John C. Montgomery, Esq., then arose and offered the following preamble and resolutions, which he prefaced by appropriate remarks. The resolutions were seconded by John M. Read, Esq., in an able and interesting speech, and were unanimously adopted.

Whereas, our community is now and has for years past been suffering under grievances that exist solely because of unwise municipal arrangements; instead of having but one local government for municipal purposes we have eight or nine: and while we are but one people and form but one community in all the every day operations of life, we are divided by ideal lines into separate communities and distinct organizations.

And whereas, this arrangement is fraught with evil, these numerous subdivisions of government rendering concerted and concentrated action upon any subject impossible, and makes each one too weak to perform its necessary duties: while, if we had but a single government, embracing the whole of the dense population within our city and districts, its magnitude would give it character, and its united and singleness of operation would give the necessary vigor and energy to its action.

Therefore, Resolved, That a law ought to be passed at the next session of the Legislature, to go into operation on the fourth of July, in the year 1850, which will unite and consolidate the whole population embraced within the city and adjacent districts into one city—under one government, and providing for the election of of the Councils or Legislature of such city from the several wards thereof.

Resolved, That the consummation of this measure will be the most effectual remedy against riot and disorder, for it will give to our city a uniform code of laws which can be vigorously administered; an efficient police force with a competent head; a well organized and controlled fire department, which together cannot fail to establish and maintain that peace and security so essential to the prosperity of all densely populated communities.

Resolved, That the President of this Meeting shall appoint a Committee of twenty-four citizens, who with himself shall be a General Executive Committee, who shall have power to fill all vacancies that may occur in their number, and whose duty it shall be to adopt and pursue all necessary means and measures to carry into effect the objects of this meeting.

Executive Committee.—Josiah Randall, John Cadwallader, Eli K. Price, Andrew Miller, William L. Hirst, Wiiliam H. Smith, Gideon G. Westcott, E. A. Penniman, Charles L. Ingram, Theodore Cuyler, John M. Kennedy, Jno. H. Dohnert, Henry D. Gilpin, John M. Read, Garrick Mallery, John M. Coleman, Henry M. Watts, James A. Campbell, Lawrence Shuster, John M. Ogden, Henry L. Benner, William White, Peter Williamson, Thos. S. Smith.

In pursuance of the instructions of the meeting, the above named Executive Committee has been appointed, and will meet on Monday evening next, the 19th inst., at Stigman's, in George street, at seven o'clock.

JOHN SWIFT, President.

This Executive Committee in pursuance of the duty charged upon them by one of the above resolutions, prepared a bill, which will be found on the House file of last Session, No. 263, entitled "An Act to incorporate the city of Philadelphia with enlarged boundaries." This bill was read in both Houses in the beginning of February, and was referred in each case to a special committee, consisting of the members from the city and county of Philadelphia, and was reported back in both Houses with a "negative recommendation," but without any comment upon the merits of the bill or the propriety of the measure proposed by it.

The report of this bill to the Senate was made on Friday, March 23d, and at the same time Mr. Savery, Senator from the County, made a minority report in favor of the measure, setting forth in strong and eloquent language the advantages that would arise from the passage of the bill into a law, which minority report was ordered to be printed.

At a subsequent period of the Session, Dr. Burden, a member from the City, offered in the lower House a bill authorizing a vote of the people of the City and County to be taken upon the question of consolidation, but he was prevented from getting a vote upon it by a call for the orders of the day, and thus ended the matter at the Legislative Session of 1850.

But, as at the session of 1845, the public sentiment in favor of consolidation was responded to by the passage of the Police law of that Session, heretofore referred to, so in 1850, the general sentiment of the city and county of Philadelphia, in favor of the conservative measure of consolidation, was answered by another Police law. This law will be found on page 666 of the Pamphlet Laws of last Session, entitled "An Act regulating the municipal and other elections in the city of Philadelphia, &c., with a supplement thereto, approved May 15th, 1850, which is not yet published.

Upon a comparison of this law with the one passed in 1845, they will be found to be nearly similar in their provisions, the principal difference being that the law of 1845, places the Police force at the disposal of the Sheriff of the County, while that of 1850, creates a "Marshal of Police," with a salary of two thousand dollars per annum; ten lieutenants, with salaries of seven hundred and thirty dollars per annum each; and a Board of Police, who do not appear to have any definite duties.

This so-called consolidated Police, in its incipient organization, caused "a speck of war" between one Board of Commissioners and the Police Marshal, and a miniature riot in another that required the intervention of the Police to suppress it. And in its action since its organization, it has shown that it is not the united and energetic police of a single city, but with all its legal unity it is still the police force of numerous separate municipalities.

The Legislature having adjourned, the question of Consolidation became a subject for discussion in the political circles, and at the

County Convention of the Democratic party for nominating an Assembly ticket, the following proceedings took place. They are copied from the Public Ledger of August 27, 1850.

"*Consolidation—Democratic Convention.*—On the Convention being called to order yesterday morning, the Vice-President moved resolutions pledging the candidates then to be selected, to the principles of consolidation. The President decided the motion out of order. An appeal was taken, and the motion was sustained by a large majority. It was then moved to postpone considering the motion until after the selection of candidates, and on a vote being taken, the postponement carried by a majority of 8. After selecting a candidate for Senate, the question on consolidation was again called up and amended to have a direct vote of the people, and so amended, was unanimously adopted.

The following was the resolution submitted:

Resolved, That the Senator and Representatives to be chosen, will be expected, and are hereby instructed to urge, vote for, and sustain at Harrisburg, a consolidation of the City and County of Philadelphia into a single Corporation.

The following resolution was offered as a substitute and adopted, viz:

Resolved, That the Candidates nominated by this Convention, for the Legislature, be instructed to vote for a proposition submitting the question of consolidating the City and County into one City to the people, an election for that purpose to be held in the several Wards and Townships in the City and County."

By the above proceedings it will be seen that in a party Convention, consisting of more than two hundred delegates selected to nominate a ticket, there was wanting but five of a majority in favor of instructing the candidates to vote directly for consolidation, and the same body was unanimous in instructing them to vote to refer the question to the people.

In the Whig Convention which nominated the County Assembly Ticket of that party, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted It is copied from the Daily News of September 3rd, 1850.

Resolved, That the candidates for Senate and Assembly to be nominated by this Convention, are expected, and are hereby instructed, to urge and vote for, and use their best exertions to promote, the enactment of a law for the consolidation of the city and districts; such act to take effect upon being approved by a majority of the citizens of the city and county of Philadelphia, at an election to be held immediately upon the passage of said act.

And in the Democratic Nominating Convention of the City of Philadelphia, held on Wednesday evening, September 4th, 1850, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That we are in favor of the passage of a law, as early as practicable, for the consolidation of the City and County of Philadelphia, to be called "The City of Philadelphia," believing, as we do, that the security, welfare, reputation and peace of the whole community require this measure to be promptly effected.

Resolved, That the candidates nominated by this Democratic General Ward Committee for Senate and Assembly be, and they are hereby instructed, in the event of their election, to vote for the passage of an act for the immediate consolidation of this City and County into a municipal corporation.

WM. BADGER, President.

ALFRED T. JONES, JOHN C. MCCALL, Secretaries.

On the 12th of September, 1850, the Committee in accordance with the suggestion of a great number of citizens issued a call for a Town Meeting, which was held in the County Court-House on Monday evening, September 16th.

The following summary of its proceedings is copied from the Evening Bulletin of the next day.

CONSOLIDATION.

GREAT TOWN MEETING.

The District Court Room was crowded excessively last evening, in answer to a call for a demonstration in favor of a consolidation of the city and districts of Philadelphia, into one municipal organization. All parties and all classes were there united, and if the room had been three times as large it would scarcely have held all who endeavored to gain admittance.

At 8 o'colck, JOHN M. READ, Esq., called the meeting to order, and upon his motion the Hon. WM. M. MEREDITH, late Secretary of the Treasury, was called to the Chair.

The following Vice-Presidents and Secretaries were also nominated and unanimously elected:

Viee-Presidents.—Col. John Swift, Hon. Edward King, Samuel V. Merrick, Wm. Rawle, Vincent L. Bradford, Henry C. Corbit, David S. Brown, Charles Robb, George W. Carpenter, Frederick Fraley, Thos. C. Rockhill, William M. Swain, Charles Macalester, Wm. C. Patterson, Wm. R. Thompson, Alexander Osborne, Jesper Harding, Thomas P. Hoopes, Job R. Tyson, Thomas Sparks, St. Geo. T. Campbell, John Naglee, Jacob Esher, John T. Smith, William H. Smith, Wm. M. Kennedy, John Brock, Thos. H. Powers, William Elder, Henry Crilley, Andrew Manderson, Saml. H. Gillingham, Isaac Kline, M. D., Hugh Clark, Adam Richards, Richard R. Spain, J. W. Kester, Jonn O'Brien, Edwin R. Cope, Alex. Cummings, Joseph Wood, Penn Dist., Michael Pray, Peleg B. Savery, Benjamin Martin, Lemuel Paynter, Peter Williamson, Peter Glasgow, Francis Dimond, Robert E. Shultz, John K. Loughlin, John G. Brenner, John G. Ninesteel, Lawrence Shuster, John H. Campbell, William Deal.

Secretaries.—George W. Biddle, Roeert Lindsay, James S. Wright, George L. Dougherty, John Oakford, Charles B. Peale.

After a brief speech from the President of the Meeting upon its objects, &c., Judge Pettit addressed the meeting in some spirited remarks upon the evils of our present municipal system, and the advantage of the proposed reform. He then read the following preamble and resolutions:

The population and wealth concentrated in the metropolis of Pennsylvania, within the ordinary bounds of a single township, exceed those of many States of the Union; and her inhabitants constituting, for moral, social and commercial purposes, one great community, should exercise a control of their local affairs and interests co-extensive with their undivided responsibility for what ever may involve their self-respect, or concern their reputation with the rest of the world.

The inhabitants of this Metropolis, in their domestic lives, in their temporary or permanent investments of capital, and in their operations in trade, should not be alienated or separated from one another by such lines as sever distinct Municipalities. Citizens residing in any street or precinct, should

have every inducement freely to select their places of business, or the sites of their important interests in any other precinct or street of the same city, with no regard to intersecting lines or limits.

Philadelphia, though, in fact, thus a single community, is by law artificially divided into many jurisdictions, unequal in dimensions, population and resources, whose boundaries are scarcely known, except to officers of justice, who recognise the lines as the limits of their ineffective functions; or to outlaws, who deride the imbecile authority which halts at an unseen border; or to strangers or citizens, who seek in vain protection ftom ordinances which differ on opposite sides of a gutter; or to disfranchised men of business, who find themselves without a vote in the selection of the magistrates who control their most important interests, in a jurisdiction other than that in which they happen to reside.

The experience of past, and the endurance of present ills, make the people of Philadelphia anxiously solicitous for self-government, on a footing commensurate with the real magnitude and importance of their local interests, and adapted to their really united character. If it be hazardous to consolidate remote or separate communities, it is not less unnatural and arbitrary to divide a single and entire community of small dimensions into several jurisdictions, separated by imaginary lines. Great evils have ensued from the system, and no advantage can result from its continuance. The inhabitants of Philadelphia have been hitherto doomed to live under a fractional complication of governments, to which the commonwealth has from time to time delegated some of the highest and most important franchises of local sovereignty. These compose nine municipalities, with various names, by whom affairs of public interest are generally regulated; and numerous other corporate bodies, independent of those municipalities, and independent of one another, by whom poor laws, health laws, police regulations, and duties belonging to various other branches of eminent domain, are irresponsibly administered.

These municipalities and boards, with their distinct deliberative or legislalative assemblies, their arrays of patronage and expenditures, their multiplied chief and inferior executive officers, Treasurers, Solicitors, Clerks, Collectors, Surveyors, Regulators, Superintendents, and other ministerial officers, subordinates and supernumeraries, day and night watch, and useless police, the Board of County Commissioners, with its extensive and powerful, and frequently complex and interfering jurisdiction, and the nondescript supervisory fiscal censorship of the County Board, compose the actual govornment of 400,000 people. The municipalities and boards, whose organization is thus intricate and thus costly, have failed to answer the purpose of local government for which their franchises were delegated to them by the State. The system—if the detached laws which have been occasionaliy passed can be said to form a system—has been productive of some of the worst evils of government, and of few, if any, of its benefits.

The people of Philadelphia, an orderly people, fully capable of self-government and of seif-protection, do not govern themselves, and therefore cannot protect themselves. They have been, and still are, unable to prevent or punish riot, arson and assassination; crlmes which have been openly perpetrated in successful defiance of the constituted authorities. There is at present no security of life or property to Philadelphians themselves, no hospitable protection to the sojourner within their limits. Causes originally trifling, which, in the government of a single large community would be passed over or disregarded as insignificant, have likewise resulted in serious public evils. Rivalries and jealousies of local rulers or official subordinates, have prevented concerted action in times of peril or difficulty, and have on other occasions produced corporate contentions, and sometimes litigations; while all who have not been involved officially in the dispute, have individually had no other desire than to co-operate for the general welfare. It has consequently been found necessary in the late law to organize an additional police force, to make it in a great measure independent of any control of the present local governments. This necessity, the natural result of so unhappy a state of things, would not continue under a single local government. At present it adds to the complication of what was previously too complicated. The organization of a powerful and expensive police, under no subordination to a government, may result in evils quite as great as those which it was intended to prevent or repress.

The citizens of Philadelphia, including in this designation the inhabitants of the nine municipalities and suburban precincts here represented, have for a long time very generally desired to change a frame of government so objectionable; and the frequent and continued manifestations of public opinion on a subject of such general interest and importance, leave it no longer doubtful that a vast majority of them entertain the opinions expressed in this preamble, and in the resolutions which follow. Much labor has been bestowed upon preparing and maturing a plan of their union in a single city, such a city as Philadelphia ought to constitute; with a single, cheap and effective government; a single system of taxation, and a police neither independent of control nor under divided subordination, whose jurisdiction shall include all the urban and suburban districts, with sufficient adjacent rural precincts. It is believed that such a change has long been regarded as one depending upon the time when it should take place, rather than upon any extensive difference of opinion as to its ultimate necessity, and it is believed, without doubt, that the community is now fully ready for its adoption: Therefore,

Resolved, That an act incorporating Philadelphia with enlarged boundaries, which shall include the nine municipalties and suburban precincts here represented, with adjacent parts, or the whole of the residue of Philadelphia county, in a single city, with a suitable frame of government on the plan aforesaid, ought to be passed at an early period of the next session of the Legislature.

Resolved, That members of the Legislature from the City and County of Philadelphia, be requested to use their best exertions to promote the passage of such an act; and that a copy of these proceedings be sent to each member of the Senate and House of Representatives from the City and County of Philadelphia, as soon as the result of the approaching general election shall have been made known.

Resolved, That the Executive Committee appointed at a general Town Meeting, held at the County Court-House, on the 16th of November, 1849, be, and the same is hereby continued, with power to add to their number, and with instructions to adopt and pursue all necessnry measures to carry out the views of this meeting.

Henry M. Watts, Esq., then took the stand and made an effectivc speech, in which he considered and dwelt upon the legal difficulties under which our officers at present labor in their efforts to suppress public disorders. Even the new Marshal of Police might be stopped by the Sheriff, when about to suppress a riot, if the Sheriff were so disposed. In a financial point of view, he said the present system was one of wanton extravagance. We expend money for the collection of taxes, when we might get the taxes collected without a tithe of the expense. We maintain nine separate and expensive governments, when we have only need of one. He was in favor of one united, powerful central government, with an efficient police, which alone can rescue our city from its present disgrace.

John M. Read, Esq., followed. He said that the incidents of every day convince us of the necessity of a union for the purpose of securing an effective police for the suppression of riots, outbreaks, murders and violence in our streets. We are now where London was 300 years ago. We have a larger population than she had then, and yet in this enlightened day we have no better police government. Under our present system we have not even got all our streets lighted with gas. In London that event did much towards the suppression of crime. If we had a united government, all our city would be lighted with gas, and all patrolled by police. He also advocated a re-organization of the fire department, with a new system, under an elective head.

Thomas Watson, Esq., made a short speech next, in which he adverted to the prevalence of crime, and asked if the dens of criminals were not known to the police. They are; and yet the rioters continue their outrages unmolested, and have made Philadelphia a by-word and a reproach.

Judge Parsons, in a speech of some length, gave a number of details of the operation of our police system in the riots of late years, as they were shown in investigations in Court before him. They exhibited in a striking light the alarming evils to which society is here exposed from the want of an efficient system of police. He alluded to the London police, and said that in 1829 London was as badly off as we are now; but then Chadwick commenced his statistics, and they are as applicable to Philadelphia now, as they then were

in London. In answer to the query, how will consolidation remedy the evils he portrayed, he said that it would produce a powerful central organization. It would exhibit a new force. It would make the heads of police more prominent, and therefore more responsible. He said that it would not take as many men to protect the city well, as there are now policemen in the city and districts.

At the close of the Judge's remarks the question was taken on the resolutions, and they were adopted without dissent. The meeting theu adjourned.

The Commitee in the discharge of a portion of the duties enjoined upon them by the last resolution, prepared and sent to each of the candidates for Senate and Assembly upon all the tickets in the City and County the following circular:

"To ——— Sir:—

In behalf of the Executive Committee of the Town Meeting, held in favor of a Union of the City and Districts into one Corporation; we have been appointed to ascertain the views of the candidates nominated for the Legislature, on that subject, and we therefore respectfuily request of you an early and explicit answer to the following question, addressed to the first named of the undersigned, viz: Will you, if elected to the Legislature, advocate and vote for a law uniting and consolidating the City and Districts or the City and County of Philadelphia into one Municipal Corporation?

JOHN H. DOHNERT, 284 Green Street.
JOHN M. OGDEN,
HENRY M. WATTS,
HENRY L. BENNER,
PETER WILLIAMSON,
GEORGE W. TRYON,
JACOB F. HOECKLY,
ANDREW MILLER,
ELI K. PRICE."

Philadelphia, Sept. 18th, 1850.

To this circular the following answers were received; the first is from the Democratic candidates in the County, all of whom were elected.

Philadelphia, Sept. 23, 1850.

Gentlemen:—The undersigned, candidates for the legislature on the Democratic ticket in the county of Philadelphia, have received a circular letter from you inquiring our views, which are cheerfully given, relative to consolidation.

The convention that placed us before the people adopted the following resolution upon the subject, to wit:

"That the candidates nominated by this convention for the legislature, be directed to vote for a proposition, submitting the question of consolidating the city and districts into one city, to the people, an election for that purpose to be held in the several wards and townships in the city and county."

To this resolution we, of course, are bound to adhere; but we will add that, feeling assured that a majority of the citizens of the county of Philadelphia concur with us in the opinion that the best interests of the entire community will be promoted by a unity of municipal authority, we will, if elected, prepare, advocate and vote for an act providing for consolidation.

Very respectfully, your obedient servants,

THOMAS H. FORSYTH,
E. A. PENNIMAN,
R. SIMPSON,
WASHINGTON J. JACKSON,
SMITH SKINNER,
WILLIAM H. SOUDER,
LEWIS C. CASSIDY,
ANDREW HAGUE,
SOLOMON DEMERES,
WILLIAM GOODWIN,
HENRY HUPLET,
ABRAHAM OLWINE.

And the following is from the Whig candidates in the City, who were also elected:

Gentlemen:—In reply to the question severally addressed to us, whether, if elected to the legislature, we will "advocate and vote for a law uniting and consolidating the city and districts, or the city and county of Philadelphia into one municipal corporation?" we beg leave to say, collectively, that we regard the subject of consolidation as now agitated, as one of great importance, demanding careful attention and mature deliberation. In a matter involving so many interests, of a legal and financial as well as of a social and moral character, the people are unquestionably entitled to be heard before final legislation is had. Hence if elected, we will cheerfully vote for a proposition by which the subject may be fairly brought before our constituents at an early day, and by which a full, fair and calm expression of public opinion may be obtained. If this expression of opinion shall be in favor of consolidation, the measure will meet with our cordial and entire support.

Very respectfully yours,

BENJAMIN MATHIAS,
CHARLES O'NEILL,
GEO. H. HART,
J. L. GOSSLER,
EDW. ARMSTRONG.

Messrs. John H. Dohnert, John M. Ogden, Henry M. Watts, and others, Committee.

And the following is from the Democratic candidates of the City:

City of Philadelphia, Sept. 18, 1850.

Gentlemen:—We have received your communication dated 16th September, and in reply, have to state, that we are in favor of consolidating the city and districts. We are of the opinion that the people are in favor of the measure; and that therefore, a special election upon the subject is unnecessary. Moreover, it will be expensive, and will delay the great public object which our fellow-citizens have in view. We therefore pledge ourselves, that, if elected to the legislature, we will use all our efforts to procure the passage of a law for the immediate consolidation of the city and county of Philadelphia.

RICHARD R. YOUNG,
JAS. W. COFFROTH,
WILLIAM DUANE,
JOHN G. THOMPSON,
JAMES P. BARR.

To John H. Dohnert, John M. Ogden, Henry M. Watts, and others, Committee.

And the following twelve letters are from the candidates upon the Whig ticket in the county:

Philadelphia, Sept. 27, 1850.

Gentlemen:—With much pleasure I answer your query with respect to consolidation. The two conventions which did me the honor to place me in nomination, unanimously decided in favor of that question; and allow me to say, that I am the decided friend of consolidation, and will advocate and vote for the measure, if elected. Yours truly,

W. D. BAKER.

Gentlemen:—I had the honor to receive a communication from you, asking if I am in favor of consolidating the city and districts into one municipal corporation, &c. In answer I have to say, that if I am elected to the legislature, I shall do all I can to bring about such a union, believing as I do, that much of the future peace, prosperity, and safety to life and property depends upon it.

I have the honor to be respectfully yours,

ALEXANDER PURVES.

September 23d, 1850.

Philadelphia, Sept. 22, 1850.

John H. Dohnert, Esq.

Dear Sir: Having received yours of the 10th inst. asking on behalf of the executive committee appointed by the town meeting, held in favor of a union of the city and districts into one corporation, whether I would, if elected to the legislature, advocate and vote for a bill in favor of the same. To your inquiry I would beg leave to reply, that I am decidedly in favor of that measure; and if elected, will give my feeble efforts to bring about the passage of such a bill.

I remain your most obedient servant,

JONATHAN CLAYTON,
Second and Greenwich Streets, Southwark.

Sun Office, Sept. 25, 1850.

John H. Dohnert, Esq., Chairman.

Sir: In reply to your interrogatory, "Will you, if elected to the legislature, advocate and vote for a law uniting and consolidating the city and districts of the city and county of Philadelphia into one municipal corporation," I answer, that I will give any such proposition my earnest, cordial and unceasing support.

Yours with respect, JOSHUA S. FLETCHER.

Philadelphia, Sept. 10, 1850.

John H. Dohnert, Esq.

Dear Sir: In answer to yours of the 16th inst. I reply that I am in favor of uniting and consolidating the city and districts; and shall cheerfully unite in any measure to bring about so desirable a result. Yours truly,

P. A. KEYSER.

Philadelphia, Sept. 20, 1850.

Gentlemen:—Your communication of the 16th inst. is before me. In reply to your inquiry, I have to say that, in the event of my election to the legislature, I will advocate and vote for "a law uniting the city and districts, or the city and county of Philadelphia, into one municipal corporation," subject to the decision of voters residing within the limits of the proposed corporation.

I am, gentlemen, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

SAML. B. H. VANCE.

To Messrs. John H. Dohnert, John M. Ogden, and others, Committee.

MESSRS. JOHN H. DOHNERT AND OTHERS.

Gentlemen,—I received your note, requesting an explicit answer to the following question: Will you, if elected to the Legislature, advocate and vote for a law uniting and consolidating the City and Districts or the City and County of Philadelphia into one Municipal Corporation; in answer, *I say yes.* I am a consolidation man, and will advocate and vote for any Bill which would produce so desirable a result.

Very respectfully, yours,

JOHN WELSH.

Spring Garden, Sept. 25th, 1850.

Kensington, September 25, 1850.

Gentlemen,—In reply to your communication requesting my views as to a Union of the city and districts, I will briefly reply by saying that I have been favourable to such a measure for the last two years; and will, if elected, use my best endeavours to have a law immediately passed to accomplish that object.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEORGE BELLIS.

To Messrs. John H. Dohnert, and others of the committee.

Holmesburg, September 28, 1850.

Gentlemen,—I am in favour of consolidation.

In haste, Yours, &c.,

JAMES CLARK.

Messrs. John H. Dohnert, and others.

Richmond, September 25th, 1850.

Sir,—A communication from Ex-Commtttee of Town Meeting in favour of a Union of the City and Districts into one corporation, has been handed me, wherein I am requested to state if I will, if elected to the Legislature, advocate and vote for a law uniting and consolidating the city and districts, &c.

The Whig County Convention, from which body I have the honour of nomination for the Assembly of the Legislature of the State, adopted a resolution, instructing the nominees of said Convention, to urge, vote for, and use their best efforts to promote the passage of an act for the consolidation of the City and Districts into one Corporation; such act to go into operation forthwith, upon the approval of the same by a majority of the voters of the city and districts of Philadelphia county, such approval to be ascertained at an election to be held for that purpose under authority of the Legislature.

Referring you to this resolution as my rule of guidance on this subject.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

SAMUEL T. HAY.

To John H. Dohnert, Esq., Chairman executive committee, &c.

TO JOHN H. DOHNERT AND OTHERS.

Gentlemen,—Your circular, in behalf of the Executive Committee in favour of a Union of the City and Districts into one Corporation, was received, and to the question proposed, reply that, if elected to the Legislature, I will advocate and vote for a law uniting the City and Districts, or, if thought now advisable, the City and County of Philadelphia into one Municipal Corporation.

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM GREEN.

Germantown, Sept. 23, 1850.

Philadelphia, Sept. 28, 1850.

Gentlemen,—I have received your favour of the 24th inst., proposing to me the query whether, if elected to the Legislature, I will advocate and vote for a law uniting and consolidating the City and Districts, or the City and County of Philadelphia, into one Municipal Corporation.

I beg leave to reply that I am in favour of the measure; and, if elected, will vote for a bill to carry it into effect.

WILLIAM RHEINER.

The following resolutions of the Keystone Club, of the First Congressional District, adopted September 18, 1850, are among a great number, of a similar character, passed at the meetings of both parties during the canvass preceding the late election:

A Mass Meeting of the Keystone Club, of the First Congressional District, was held on Wednesday evening, 18th instant, at the Southwark Hall. The meeting was organized at eight o'clock, by the President taking the Chair. After some business of minor importance, George L. Dougherty, Esq. offered the following resolutions, which were warmly seconded by Colonel Thomas B. Florence, and were unanimously adopted. The meeting was addressed by Col. Florence, R. M. C. Ray, Esq., L. S. Burkart, Esq., and William E. Lehman, Esq.

Whereas, The question of uniting and consolidating the various municipal corporations within the county of Philadelphia under one government, is now agitated in our community, and although it is not strictly a party political question, but being one which is in a greater or less degree interesting to every citizen of Philadelphia county, we deem it our duty to express frankly and decidedly our sentiments thereon.

Therefore Resolved, That in the midst of the disorder and crime that has been prevalent in our community for some time past, there is no assurance of the safety of persons, or the security of property, and although our taxation is burdensome, we do not derive those advantages which municipal government is established to secure.

Resolved, That the union of the various municipal corporations of the city and county of Philadelphia under one government, whereby there would be one powerful, energetic, and effective police force, under the command of one man of character and reputation, who would be held responsible for the peace and order of the city; and one taxing power, with ample facilities for the payment of taxes directly into a single treasury, there would be established a cheap, efficient, and protecting government, that could not fail to make us a happy, thriving, and prosperous people, and place Philadelphia again in its once enviable position among the metropolitan cities of the United States.

Resolved, That we earnestly recommend our candidates for the Legislature, if elected, to advocate and vote for such a consolidation.

MILES SWEENY, President.

WM. MCMULLIN, } Secretaries.
WM. COUGHLIN, }

Such an unanimity of public sentiment, induced by the discussion of the subject in general meetings of the people; by the Grand Inquests of the County; by our Judges, and by our political conventions, could result in nothing less than the calm and deliberate purpose expressed by each candidate for election to the Senate and House of Representatives, in favor of the passage of a law providing for the union of the city and districts, or the city and county, into one city.

With such unqualified public assurances from each of the candidates, the Executive Committee and the constituency of these gentleman were highly gratified, and the Committee ordered the following report to be published.

The Executive Committee of the friends of Consolidation, appointed and continued by the Town Meetings of 16th November, 1849, and 16th September, 1850, in submitting to their fellow-citizens the foregoing communications from the candidates for the Legislature, deem it their duty to observe that their Committee is composed of men of all political parties, who have had no disposition to interfere with local political arrangements.

Though the Committee regret that the reply of the candidates of the Whig party in the city is less explicit than it should have been, yet the views declared generally by the candidates of all parties in both city and county, are such as give the assurance that this great measure will receive favorable consideration by the next Legislature, and place its consummation at an early period beyond all reasonable doubt.

The Committee congratulate their fellow-citizens upon the unanimity of public sentiment in favor of this important measure. Less than a year has elapsed since the appointment of the Committee. At the last Session of the Legislature Mr. Savery, Senator from the County, was the only one of the eighteen members of both Houses from the city and county, that openly advocated consolidation, and now the Committee are able to present to the public the written assurances of the great majority of the thirty-four candidates for the Legislature in the city and county, that if elected, they will advocate and vote for the measure.

That the purpose of the letter of the Committee to the candidates of the several parties may not be misunderstood, they add, that whatever answers had been received, no intention was enter-

tained of recommending a separate ticket to be voted by the friends of consolidation at the approaching election.

By order of the Committee,

ANDREW MILLER, Secretary.

September 28th, 1850.

Having a dense population of near 420,000 people residing upon an area of about eighty thousand acres of ground—bound together by the same relations, interests and pursuits, and yet separated by twenty-nine distinct local governments, including boroughs and townships, it is not surprising there should be a strong and long continued expression of public opinion against this state of things: for what man of sense would strike out as an original idea such a plan of government for one people. Its complexity, irresponsibility, wastefulness and consequent oppression will appear manifest to any one who contemplates it. The assessed value of real estate within the city and county subject to taxation, is about 114 millions of dollars, and if to this be added the immense value of personal property, and compute the amount of revenue produced, at a rate of taxation varying from 1½ to 2 per cent., an idea can be formed of the enormous amount annually raised and paid by the people for the support of government.

To free our community from these unnecessary separate governments, and to concentrate all taxing powers in the hands of the immediate representatives of the people of each ward, is one of the prominent objects of the proposed change. A simple, cheap, strong, representative government, like that of the State, would be better understood and more certainly promote the public welfare.

The amount now annually paid to tax collectors in the city of Philadelphia alone, is alleged to be more than $67.000; and if to this be added the large sum paid in the districts and county, some provision seems necessary by which the tax payers, for punctual payment, should be allowed to retain the amount now paid to collectors. This would be a gain both to the government and the citizen. The present bill, therefore, provides this reform.

It being the obvious current of popular opinion to elect all officers having important public functions to perform, the bill also prescribes that the Guardians of the Poor, the Members of the Board of Health, the Directors and Comptrollers of Public Schools, the City Commissioners, Supervisors of Highways, the Treasurer, Auditor of Accounts, the Receiver of Taxes, the Solicitor, Mayor of the City, and other officers, shall be elected by a majority of votes.

The net debts of the County, of the Guardians of the Poor and of several districts, boroughs and townships, after deducting the several sinking funds of the said corporations, are to be consolidated into one debt, to be called the debt of the City of Philadelphia; and certificates are to be issued to the several owners in lieu of those now held by them, at the option of such owners, payable with same rate of interest, and at the same time as those now held by them are made payable. All the estate, real and personal, of the aforesaid corporations, are vested in the city of Philadelphia; provided, however, that all estates and incomes now held in trust by either of the said corporations, shall

be held by the city of Philadelphia for the same uses, trusts, limitations and charities, as they are now held by the said corporations respectively.

It is also made the duty of the Councils of said city, to raise by tax a sum sufficient to pay the annual interest of such consolidated debt, and within thirty years to discharge the principal sum; and the Councils are restricted in creating future loans without the authoritative vote of the people.

For the preservation of order and the suppression of crimes and misdemeanors, and for the protection of persons and property, the Councils are required to organize a police and a fire department, either as one body, or to act independently of each other, and are clothed with ample powers on the premises.

The offices and functions of the County Commissioners, Treasurer, Auditor, County Board, Police Marshal, Supervisors of Townships, and others, cease and determine on the organization of the new city, and their respective duties will be performed by other officers created by this act.

It is also provided that all laws and ordinances in force not inconsistent with this act shall continue in force until such laws shall be repealed by the Legislature, or such ordinances shall be altered or repealed by the Councils, and a mode is directed by which universality shall soon be given to the laws and ordinances for the government of the city.

It is not intended to interfere with the last apportionment law, by which the election of Senators and Representatives from the City and County of Philadelphia to the General Assembly of the State is regulated, and therefore a section is introduced in this bill for such elections as heretofore.

Before the next Septennial apportionment is made, it is anticipated that the Constitution will be so amended as to provide for elections by districts. But with this we have nothing to do, and only refer to it in connection with our recommendation that the present apportionment may stand as it is.

While enjoying the blessings of peace and prosperity, the united capital and energies of one people can accomplish much more in the promotion of science and the arts: in the extension of internal improvement, in the establishment of charities and the adornment of the city; and, if threatened by the terrors and evils of war, could more successfully defend against a sudden invasion, than if the same people were separated from each other by distinct municipal governments.

When the honors too of the city are to be offered to any distinguished public benefactor, it does not seem proper to confine the gratification to the narrow limits of Vine and Cedar streets.

The experience of this and all other large cities, American and European, bears witness that for preserving public order, the rights of persons and property and all that constitutes good government, there must be a community of feeling as well as of interest and business relations. One people, distracted by diversities of local laws, and the rivalries, jealousies, prejudices and animosities engendered thereby, cannot abide harmoniously together. Common sense teaches that separate municipal districts, independent of each other in all respects,

need some other bond of union than a system of police law. It only increases the evil by the establishment of another central power, which, not emanating from the people themselves, and in many respects foreign to and in collison with their local laws, it is as natural as the unrestrained passions of men that they will resist. The despotism of force may for a time subdue the disorder, violence and crime, which the weakness and incapacity of so many disjointed governments have failed to do; but the only true, reasonable and efficient policy will be to obliterate all sectional and local laws, and make for one people one government, in which every citizen, be he evil or well disposed, feels he is represented, and therefore concerned in executing the laws he helped to enact.

By order of the Executive Committee,

JAMES A. CAMPBELL, Chairman.

ANDREW MILLER, Secretary.

The following gentlemen compose the Committee:

John Cadwallader,
Eli K. Price,
Gideon G. Westcott,
Charles L. Ingram,
John M. Read,
John M. Coleman,
Henry L. Benner,
John M. Ogden,
Francis Tiernan,
William White,
George W. Tryon,
Job R. Tyson,
John G. Brenner,
Josiah Randall,
William L. Hirst,
Henry M. Watts,
John H. Dohnert,
John M. Kennedy,
Edward A. Penniman,
Jacob F. Hoeckley,
Thomas S. Smith,
Peter Williamson,
Alexander Cummings,
Jacob Esher,
Christopher Fallon,
Michael Pray.

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